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RUEHMK/AMEMBASSY MANAMA IMMEDIATE 0075
RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT IMMEDIATE 0019
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH IMMEDIATE 0307
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 0833
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 000146

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STATE FOR EUR/RPM (BROTZEN), NEA/ARP (JACHIM)

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [QA](#)

SUBJECT: ISAF LIAISON GROUP TO STAY IN QATAR ANOTHER THREE MONTHS AFTER TALKS EXTENDED

REF: A. USNATO 139 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. REID/BROTZEN E-MAIL 06MAR 2007

Classified By: AMB VICTORIA NULAND; REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1.(U) This is a request for guidance. See para. 7,

2.(C) Summary: NATO Secretary General (SYG) Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and the Qatari Crown Prince cleared the air between NATO and Qatar in a March 3 telephone call, extending NATO talks for another three months and allowing the ISAF liaison function to continue in the interim. NATO plans to send Qatar a new draft text of a possible broad framework agreement within approximately two weeks and to follow up with further talks in Doha shortly thereafter. We need to examine our substantive negotiating input for NATO carefully so as to make the most use of this three-month window. End Summary.

3.(C) NATO SYG de Hoop Scheffer spoke Saturday, March 3, with the Qatari Crown Prince, and after clearing the air, both agreed that each will be more involved personally in future NATO-Qatar discussions which will take place over the coming months.⁸ In discussions between NATO Deputy Assistant General (DASG) Robert Simmons and BGEN Abdullah later on March 3, the time frame was more clearly set as the next 3 months.⁸ As a result the NATO ISAF liaison group working at the al-Udeid Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) is staying in Qatar for another three months as talks continue (REF. A).

4.(C) Simmons plans to produce a bracketed text based on a recent Qatari draft (only circulated at NATO Headquarters late Monday, March 5 and sent to interested U.S. inter-agency parties via Ref. B) and to send it to Qatar within one to two weeks. He said it would be a common negotiating text and would replace dueling texts which so far had yielded little fruit. Simmons said that he already has discussed visiting Doha for another round of talks shortly after sending the

bracketed common text. He predicted at least three rounds of talks with Qatar over the coming three months. Simmons also said that continuing use of respective existing Allied defense cooperation agreements (DCA) as the basis for status of personnel in the Al-Udeid ISAF liaison group had been his understanding of the state of play on jurisdiction in this interim period. He also reported that agreement had been reached between NATO and Qatar on a technical information security agreement, such as that agreed by NATO with Kuwait in late 2006. Simmons said that the agreement could become an annex to a larger agreement, should it materialize. Otherwise it could be a stand-alone document.

5.(C) Asked what closer involvement by the SYG and the Qatari Crown Prince in the talks would mean operationally, NATO authorities were somewhat unclear. Certainly they expect the SYG to review outgoing proposals first hand and perhaps to pursue a dialogue with the Crown Prince through correspondence or calls at milestones in the discussion, such as perhaps a cover letter to the upcoming bracketed text. Simmons told the NATO Political Committee (PC) on March 5 that neither the Crown Prince nor BGEN Abdullah suggested any additional flexibility in their respective discussions on March 3. Substantive differences remain over the Qatari desire for a NATO security guarantee and its desire for criminal jurisdiction over NATO personnel. Simmons also noted an interesting side discussion with Qatar on March 2 in which Qatar had said that any prospective agreement could apply only to current NATO Allies and not to partners or future Allies. (Note: Simmons said that he interpreted this to be a hedge against possible Israeli accession to NATO or NATO work with Israel under the current Mediterranean Dialogue Partner framework. End Note.)

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6.(C) While PC review of the state of play was inconclusive, it suggested that few Allies would be flexible on offering Qatar a security guarantee. Opinions were mixed as to whether they would consider alternate formulas for criminal jurisdiction, although prevailing opinion was to be cautious. Several Allies, including Canada and UK, who both welcomed the extra 90 days of liaison window at al-Udeid, foresaw no meaningful changes in substantive positions by either NATO or Qatar. Simmons said that, by demonstrating last week that Allies were willing to leave Qatar, perhaps NATO had introduced a more modest Qatari estimation of the leverage that the ISAF liaison group's presence at al-Udeid represents.

7.(S/NF) Guidance request: As per last week's discussions between Ambassador Nuland and Legal Adviser Bellinger, we request guidance on how to move forward on a NATO agreement on jurisdictional issues with Qatar while still protecting the equities in our bilateral DCA.

OLSON